

# Intangible Cultural Heritage Update

News and notes on  
Newfoundland and Labrador's  
Intangible Cultural  
Heritage Program

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## Avalon Folklore Project Launched

Since 2008, the Intangible Cultural Heritage office of the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador (HFNL) has worked to provide a broad range of training workshops throughout the province. While this approach has reached a lot of communities, there is often little opportunity for follow-up support, or on-site guidance, as community groups develop their own projects.

In response to this lack of follow-up, HFNL folklorist Dale Jarvis has developed a project-based training program to help community groups, this year with a focus on the Avalon region. Jarvis, the foundation's Intangible Cultural Heritage Development Officer, often provides professional development training for communities engaged in cultural documentation, folklore, folklife, and oral history projects.

"The Avalon Folklore Project is exciting for me because I will get to work alongside a community group, from start to finish, as they develop a small local folklore project," says Jarvis.

Communities in the area will submit ideas for projects to the foundation, which will select two projects for work in 2012.

"The foundation will walk the community through the process of planning and implementing their project," explains Jarvis. "We will give project-specific training and lead community-based workshops."

The training will culminate in a final presentation or community activity, where the general public will be invited to see the collected research.

"We often hear about traditions that are under threat," says Jarvis. "The Avalon Folklore Project will allow us to work with communities on those parts of their culture that they feel are important to safeguard."

Interested communities can contact Jarvis toll free at 1-888-739-1892 ext 2, or email [ich@heritagefoundation.ca](mailto:ich@heritagefoundation.ca). Priority will be given to projects where traditions are currently in danger of being lost, or which are in communities where the ICH office has not done work in the past. Deadline for submissions is July 31st, 2012.

## Max Clarke's Make & Break Engines

*By Joelle Carey*

Make and break marine engines have been around Newfoundland and Labrador since the early twentieth century. Introduced around 1910, the engines were a new form of transportation around the province. Transportation by boat had previously meant setting sails or rowing, so the make and break engines were a welcome break from the labour of life in the harsh, unforgiving climate.

"For the most part in Newfoundland, they were using them up until the early 60s... up until then that's all they used were the make and breaks. When the four cycle engines came on stream, particularly the diesel s, which didn't burn very much fuel compared to the make and break, a lot of people got rid of them and just used them as an anchor... and forgot them" says Max Clarke of Paradise, who has refused to forget.

Max is an engineer who has become known for his knowledge of make and break engines. For the last few years he has been repairing and restoring these antique engines. He is now known among many in the make and break engine community for his skills with the old engines. I had the privileged to sit down with Max to talk about his knowledge and love of make and break engines.

"It's a very simple engine," says Max. "It probably got its name, make and break, because just about anything that could go wrong you could probably make it yourself or at least you could rig it so you wouldn't be broken down." He continues, "you could manage to get it to work somehow."

"Most of its power is coming from the flywheel. The flywheel is so big and massive and huge once it starts turning you get kinetic energy," stated Max, talking about why the make and break engines were popular in Newfoundland and Labrador. The engines were simple and had very limited parts making it easy for fishermen to repair them quickly and cheaply while on land or water.

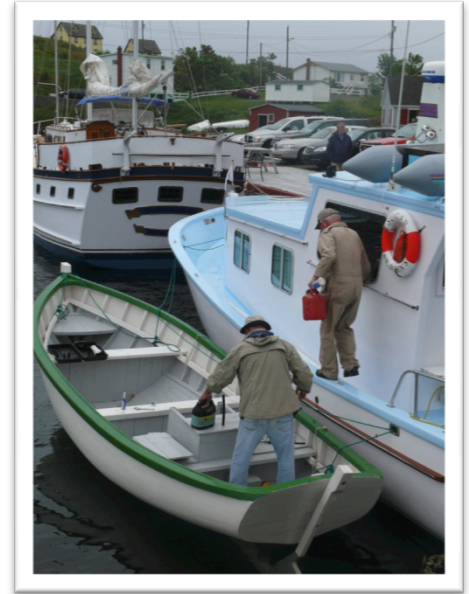
There were very few problems with them old engines but one issue that comes up again and again is a problem with the trigger spring, responsible for creating the movement needed for ignition. Again, Max insists that this problem was a cheap fix and a clever fisherman would be able to start his engine regardless of if his trigger spring was working.

"Everybody was under the impression that this spring would break. But you could use an elastic band... Fishermen use to have elastic bands around their oil pants, it was just a rubber strap. This is what they would use to get home or you could just hold it with your finger until you got home. But everybody was under the impression that these springs break, but they didn't break, they rusted out," Max told me during our interview.

Salt water spray, an everyday part of life for the fishermen of Newfoundland and Labrador, was the leading factor in the degradation of these engines. "These engines, as fishermen used them, you would have spray coming over the boat all the time and it would go onto the engine. They didn't even bother to protect

them so [there was] salt water going over on a constant basis," stated Max.

The spray was also responsible for, what Max says, is the most serious problem with antique make and breaks –cracks in the



cylinder head. "There's a water jacket and what happens is you get a rust build up between the jacket and the cylinder liner and it just builds up and builds up," explained Max. "When something builds up and has nowhere to go, something has to break." At one point this might have meant that the life of the engine was over but, thanks to advances in technology, Max is able to repair most of these problems. He uses a machine lathe to make his own parts and modern epoxy filling to repair cracks to the outside of the cylinder.

While many men are now running diesel engines in their boats, Max saw owning a make and break engine powered boat as a privilege. "These engines were all but disappearing. I've always had a great affection, really, for the equipment and the craftsmanship which was put into these engines." Max's passion for these engines is obvious from his choice of words.

He is sometimes questioned about his old motor and boat. "People ask me why I have an old boat, a type of fishing boat, and an old engine. I would always answer them by saying 'What about people with antique cars? Why do they have them? If people have antique cars, why can't I have an antique boat and engine?'"

His love of make and break engines started when he was just a boy growing up in Southern Labrador. At that time, make and break engines were the only mode of transportation from isolated outport communities like the one Max grew up in.

During our interview he recalled his childhood when everyone had make and break engines. "As a kid growing up in an outport, where did you go? You went down in the stage. You went down on the stage head. You got in a boat. Of course, you couldn't start one of these engines until you were a hearty boy, about 9 or 10 years old. But at 9 or 10 years old you'd start the engine and operate it."

Max knows that he is not the only one on the island with a great appreciation and love for these engines. On the day that I talked to Max he told me a story about an elderly gentleman who felt the same connection to these engines.

"There was this older gentleman and I was in to the yacht club and I heard a horn blow and it got my attention and I went over. Sam Bussey. I knew Sam, and he said 'Where's your boat?', this was the 4 Acadia, and I said 'It's down by the dock.' 'Oh,' he said, 'I thought it was gone.' He said, 'I went all around the bay looking for it.' And he said, 'You know, I raised my family with one of them.' So the engines meant so much to them, it was part of their livelihood. If the engine didn't work, they didn't fish."

When asked to describe the feeling of being in a make and break powered boat a contemplative look fell over Max's face. He responded, "I don't know how you would describe something like that. It was part of your life." He continued, "They were the only mode of transportation. We grew up in them."

Since January 2012 Max has restored four antique make and break engines back to running order, one of which I had the privilege of seeing. It was his wife, Sandra, who provided me with the correct number of restorations this year after

Max insisted he has only done five or six altogether. While he is modest about his

abilities and knowledge, members of the make and break community continuously bring Max's name up as the guy to talk to about make and breaks. With Max Clarke, the make and breaks will be around for years to come as he spreads his passion throughout the province in the form of a putt-putt engine.

*(Photos, from start of article: Max Clarke holding gas can about to board his Vokey-built make and break powered boat; Manufacturing plate on Max Clarke's 5 Acadia restoration; 5 Acadia engine restored by Max Clarke; Handmade battery coil made by Max Clarke. Photos by Joelle Carey.)*





## The Make & Break Flotilla and Parts Swap, August 4th

*By Joelle Carey*

This summer the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador is inviting you to come out and celebrate the marine history of our province at the 2012 Provincial Folklife Festival in Bonavista, Newfoundland.

Make and Break Engines are the focus of this year's Provincial Folklife Festival to be held on August 4th in Bonavista. Happening in connection with the town's Church Street Festival, the Make and Break Engine Festival hopes to bring awareness to the engines on which our province relied so heavily throughout the early twentieth century. Additionally, we hope to celebrate the men and women who have been keeping this marine tradition alive in our province.

To celebrate, two main events will be held on Saturday, August 4th. The first, a make and break engine flotilla, will begin at 12:00 pm in Bonavista. The event will showcase members of the make and break community who still use these iconic engines in small marine vessels. Participants will launch their boats in the community of Bonavista, start their engines, and parade around Bonavista Bay filling the skies with the tuk-a-tuk-a-tuk of those old engines.

Following the flotilla, at 1:00 pm, a Parts Swap will take place in the parking lot of Harbour Quarters, near Ryan Premises, in Bonavista. During this event, tables will be provided to display parts for trade or sale. At this time, make and break owners will also be encouraged to share stories and experience amongst themselves and with members of the general public.

Part of this second event will also take place inside the Ryan Premises National Historic site where the Wooden Boat Museum of Newfoundland and Labrador will be displaying a small exhibit on the influence of make and break engines in Newfoundland and Labrador.

If you have a make and break engine, or spare parts, and would like to participate please contact Joelle by email [joelle@heritagefoundation.ca](mailto:joelle@heritagefoundation.ca) or by calling, toll free, 1-888-739-1892 ext. 5. We hope to see you there!



## *Museum Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (MANL) presents* Intangible Cultural Heritage Collections in Museums

Tuesday, August 21, 2012; 9 - 4:30, Labrador Interpretation Centre, Northwest River, Labrador

Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) is also known as "living heritage" and it encompasses many traditions, practices and customs. In this one-day workshop participants will learn what ICH is, and that it is not only inherited "old" traditions but also contemporary rural and urban customs and traditions practiced by our diverse cultural groups and incorporated into contemporary expression. In this workshop participants will learn how to document ICH and living traditions in their community, support and encourage the passing on of knowledge and skills, how to digitize this material for easier access, and explore the potential of ICH as a resource for community development.

Instructor: Dale Jarvis, ICH Development Officer. Registration fees: \$70 for MANL members, \$95 for non-members

Registration Deadline August 1, 2012. To register contact Danielle Rundquist, (709) 722-9034 [drundquist@nf.aibn.com](mailto:drundquist@nf.aibn.com)



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